

Upcounty Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2018

(July 2017 – June 2018)



Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett



Montgomery County Council



At-Large
Hans Riemer
President



District 4
Nancy Navarro
Vice-President



District 1
Roger Berliner



At-Large
Marc Elrich



At-Large
Nancy Floreen



District 5
Tom Hucker



District 3
Sidney Katz



At-Large
George Leventhal



District 2
Craig Rice

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*Upcounty Citizens
Advisory Board*



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR, 2017-2018

As Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve and represent the citizens of this region of the county, also referred to as the North County. This past fiscal year has been one of the most productive providing the community with a forum on issues and concerns that affect their daily commuting decisions and quality of life. The members of the Advisory Board represent various communities and constituencies in the North County, and as such, it has been my objective to provide the community with timely, relevant and factual information and to make informed recommendations to the County Executive.

In September, we kicked off the year with “transportation,” and we heard from the Maryland State Highway Administration’s Development Office on Governor Hogan’s I-270 Innovative Congestion Management Project proposal. The project will introduce a variety of road improvements along the I-270 West Spur, at the I-495 Outer Loop, and up to Frederick County Line. The Advisory Board in October received a presentation on the updated profile of the Upcounty’s demographics, economic data, and social trends to ascertain what is happening in this region and how the North County compares with other regions within Montgomery County. Councilmember Craig Rice, in our November meeting, led a discussion and answered questions about a range of topics, including community infrastructure in Clarksburg; cell tower antennas; the Charter Review Commission’s proposal to restructure the County Council and education. To close the calendar year, members of the General Assembly were invited to discuss legislative priorities for the 2018 General Assembly Session. The Upcounty is represented by members of the legislature from Districts 14, 15, 17, 19 and 39. Following tradition, in January 2018, the Advisory Board was pleased to host the County Executive’s public forum on the county’s FY19 Operating Budget. The budget forum was held at the BlackRock Center for the Arts where the public was able to share their issues and concerns directly with the County Executive. The meeting drew well over 100 participants from the North County communities. In February, the Advisory Board convened to discuss and rank the community priorities captured from the January 2018 County Executive Budget Forum. The board summarized several recommendations and forwarded them to the County Executive. During our March meeting, Councilmember Nancy Floreen shared her perspective on the future of the County. In addition, Police Commander Anderson (1st District), Commander Plazinski (5th District), Commander Patil (6th District), and Lt. Amy Daum (5th District) provided an overview of police activities in the Upcounty region. With concerns about school security and safety, the board dedicated our April meeting to “education.” We hosted Councilmember Craig Rice, Chair of the County Council’s Education Committee, and Dr. Jack Smith, Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools. There were a wide range of topics discussed, including input from community residents attending the meeting.

To close out my tenure as Chair, I am happy to say that two years ago, the Upcounty Citizen Advisory Board was the first board in the county to host David Petr, the new CEO/President of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, (MCEDC) and MCEDC’s Chairman, Bob Buchanan. To close out this year at our May meeting, the Board again hosted MCEDC’s Chairman Bob Buchanan, and MCEDC’s David Petr. They both updated our board on development activities the MCEDC has pursued since its formation, including efforts to attract and retain businesses in Montgomery County, and the Upcounty in particular.

Again, it has been a pleasure to serve as the Chair of the Upcounty Citizen Advisory Board and to have the steady hand and guidance of the Regional Director, Catherine Matthews. I want to thank my fellow board members for their leadership, dedication and support, and who represented and fiercely advocated on behalf of their respective communities as well. The state of the board is healthy as we move forward into 2018 – 2019, and transition to new leadership.

Respectfully,


Arthur Edmunds
Chair

About the Board

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/upcounty

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) provides advice and recommendations to the County Executive, County Council, and Upcounty Regional Director on issues affecting the northern portion of the county known as the "Upcounty" or "North County" in addition to acting as a two-way communication link between the County and the community. The twenty volunteer members of UCAB are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

Geographic Scope The Upcounty region is defined as being roughly north and west of Shady Grove Road and it comprises about one-half of the geographic area of Montgomery County and one-third of its population. It ranges in character from urban to rural in communities such as Barnesville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac and Poolesville. Therefore, UCAB's members are selected for geographic balance as well as for diversity of background, community and professional experience and expertise.

Structure UCAB operates in public meetings and has two standing committees: the Land Use Committee and the Quality of Life Committee. UCAB's leadership consists of the chairperson, a first vice-chair, and a second vice-chair along with the chair of the Land Use Committee and chair of the Quality of Life Committee. Other UCAB members also provide liaison to various other County boards and committees.

Issues Usually after a planning retreat in July, the UCAB and each of its committees meets generally every month from September through June. The full board convenes in July for a planning retreat. The UCAB's committees study a wide variety of issues and help to craft the board's resulting recommendations. The Land Use Committee has reviewed and commented on master planning practices in the Upcounty, issues related to urbanization, the County's Growth Policy, development pressures on the Agricultural Reserve, the evolution of the Life Sciences Center at Shady Grove, issues faced by agricultural and related businesses, affordable housing, and growth of the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College. The Quality of Life Committee has reviewed and commented on out-of-school programs for youths, programs for immigrant families and children at risk, mental health services, library services, safety of young drivers and pedestrians, public safety, services for seniors, and the general health of the county's community. Comments have been offered on many of these issues while others may continue to be examined for future comment or recommendation.

Recommendations During the year, UCAB interacts formally and informally with county officials, county and state agency staff, and community leaders in order to understand issues comprehensively before forwarding comments or recommendations to the County Executive and/or County Council. UCAB also meets with the Executive during the year to discuss Upcounty priorities and to summarize their work at their annual meeting, and traditionally, the Executive's priorities for both the operating budget and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) have been responsive to UCAB's recommendations. In the past, the Board has also hosted receptions for officials and community leaders in order to promote networking and the sharing of ideas. On an annual basis, the board meets with State legislators who represent the Upcounty area in the General Assembly, and various county department heads to explore issues and solutions. Additionally, UCAB traditionally hosts the County Executive's annual Capital and Operating budget forums to solicit community comments. Those comments are then prioritized by the board and forwarded to Executive Branch departments and the County Executive.

The Director of the Upcounty Regional Office, Catherine Matthews, can be contacted at 240.777.8040 or via email at catherine.matthews@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board

2017-2018



Left to right sitting: Hassan Dixon (Germantown); Bethzaida McGuire (Damascus); Arthur Edmunds (Laytonsville); Tanya Sun (Clarksburg); Andrew Dibonge (Clarksburg).

Left to right standing: Mamady Kamara (Gaithersburg/Germantown); Alan Young (Gaithersburg); William Roberts (Gaithersburg); Linda Moore (Montgomery Village); Dennis Barnes (Montgomery Village); Florence Messi (Damascus/Gaithersburg); Darlene Kerr (Germantown); Kraig Walsleben (Damascus); Kevin Linck (Montgomery Village); Tobi Printz-Platnick (Boys/Germantown); David Rosenbaum (Germantown).

Not available when photo was taken:



Mark Firley
Montgomery Village



Cheng Tu
Shady Grove/N. Potomac



Ian Weston
North Potomac

Officers

Chair – Arthur Edmunds

1st Vice Chair – Mark Firley

2nd Vice Chair – Kraig Walsleben

UCAB Committee Chairs

Land Use Committee – Ian Weston

Quality of Life Committee – Andrew Dibonge

Liaisons to Other Boards and Committees

Airpark Liaison Committee – Alan Young

Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group – Kraig Walsleben

Permitting Services Advisory Committee – Darlene Kerr/Arthur Edmunds

Shady Grove Implementation Advisory Committee – Cheng Tu

Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Advisory Group – Kevin Linck

Speed Camera Advisory Committee – David Rosenbaum

PEPCO Community Advisory Group – Kevin Linck

Issues and Comments

Year in Summary

2017-2018

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) hosted presentations and discussions of general interest to the northern county community that included education, economic development, traffic congestion solutions, future use of surplus properties, the security of county IT systems, the possibilities for the Agricultural Reserve, and master plans for MARC train communities.

Parts of the Upcounty or North County are now in a redevelopment phase while yet other areas in this part of the county are experiencing activity to develop the last of untouched land. The Agricultural Reserve is still regarded as an important asset for the county for economic and “quality of life” reasons. Our population is noted as being one of the most diverse in the nation with economic opportunities being created by an increasing number of small businesses, yet officials are challenged by trends such as the increasing violence in schools, the growing need for affordable housing, and issues facing disengaged youths.

In order to be balanced thinkers and solution-finders, UCAB engaged subject matter experts to help us better understand the context, factors, and potential impacts of the issues we face and may face in the near future. Here are highlights from this year’s discussions held with elected officials, government agency staff, and community leaders. Comments or recommendations noted in **bold** text were stated in our budget testimony or offered to appropriate officials for their consideration.

Quality of Life – The board’s Quality of Life Committee explored a variety of subjects that affect our residents, communities, workforce and businesses daily. Committee members invited guests from county agencies and community organizations to discuss proposals and strategies that would result in improvements in education, economic development, community safety and transportation. Here are some thoughts that were discussed, and a few conclusions reached by the committee.

Education

- We discussed the concern for safety in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) considering the recent trend of mass school shootings and how similar incidents can be prevented. **A suggestion was made to MCPS’ Superintendent that input from the County Police Department’s Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Program (CPTED) should be considered in school construction designs and renovation plans.**
- Police Commanders from the 1st, 5th and 6th Districts provided Upcounty crime reports. Major community concerns were addressed in meetings and new safety precautions that the Police are using were explained. The guest speakers also presented how their safety protocols have proved that serious events can be prevented in many cases.
- A presentation about the Cybersecurity program at Montgomery College discussed the need for cybersecurity in all areas of the workforce and the trend of established employees returning to the College to get practical knowledge and experience. An issue that is frequently identified is that many employees entering the workforce have theoretical knowledge, but they do not have the practical skills that are needed for various industries. Montgomery College’s program bridges that gap and creates a pathway to the certification they need to be considered for jobs.

- A discussion was held with MCPS staff to address the board's concerns about teacher retention and the need for resources in the classroom. Consideration was given to how businesses can support the school system in preparing students to enter the workforce as future employees.
- **The Board supported funding for programs that, in partnerships with Montgomery College, emphasize trade-related training and we encourage businesses to also partner with the College to provide such training.**
- **Additionally, UCAB recommended funding to preserve the afterschool "Excel Beyond the Bell" program for middle-school youths.**

Economic Development

- The Committee focused on the current state of nightlife in the upper county area. Some of the concerns expressed related to possible noise violations and the potential threats of crime.
- Several presentations highlighted potential business projects and new mixed-use developments. **The Committee discussed strategies to encourage more large businesses to establish a presence in the county, and what it would mean for our economy.**
- **The Board recommended funding for creative ideas that will help small and mid-sized businesses to increase the pool of skilled workers needed for the variety of industries in the county.**
- **The Board also supported a higher percentage funding through the hotel tax for *Visit Montgomery*. That would help in the branding and marketing of the Agricultural Reserve as a leisure and entertainment destination for residents, visitors and businesses.**
- **We supported expanding transit services for employees and the general public traveling to and from to the Premium Outlets in Clarksburg.**
- Guests from the Clarksburg and Poolesville Area Chambers of Commerce provided an update on the current state of small businesses in their respected areas. Together, we strategized on how a community and its local chamber of commerce can work together to strengthen our Upcounty economy.
- We highlighted the need to address vacant office buildings and how that issue affects our local economy. This subject will be discussed further in the upcoming year.
- Staff from the Department of Environmental Protection discussed the benefits of clean and renewable energy, and how residents and businesses can take advantage of programs that exist.
- **We proposed a reduction in regulatory fees for those businesses that provide internships to our publicly-educated workforce.**

Security of County IT Systems

- In a meeting at Montgomery College's Cybersecurity Lab, UCAB members discussed security measures taken by the county government in its enterprise systems and operations to ensure that transactions such as recreation class registrations, and documents such as health records, etc. are secure.

Transportation

- We held several meetings to discuss the current state of traffic in the Upcounty region. A presentation on the county's future Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT) provided more insight on the part of the system that will serve the Maryland Route 355 North sector.
- The Committee reviewed the State's plan to improve traffic congestion on Interstate 270 (I-270), and how the Governor's incentives may help.
- **We strongly encouraged funding new Ride On routes that will connect Upcounty communities to each other.** For example, direct transit service is needed between Damascus and Germantown for students attending Montgomery College's Germantown campus or for residents traveling to medical appointments, or to jobs. As time passes, we expect more direct routes between Germantown, Damascus, and Clarksburg so those communities can be linked.

Health & Human Services

- **We supported grants to congregations and community organizations that provide the important safety net of services. The Board is specifically interested in ensuring that funding is continued for the African-American Health Initiative.**

Land Use – The Land Use Committee focused much of the year on transportation and land utilization projects that had both local and countywide context and impacts. Here are specific thoughts and consideration discussed by the Land Use Committee.

Transportation Planning

- The Committee applauded the county's continued focus on ensuring that we use state-of-the-art systems to monitor and adjust traffic patterns with signaling and timing controls, traffic modeling, and general equipment enhancements. In a tour of the Transportation Management Center, Committee members received an up-close experience of the technical equipment that the Board advocated for in previous years.
- **The Committee encourages County Government to work with the Governor and State Highway Administration officials to move projects and studies forward in a timely manner that will provide successful short-term solutions to congestion issues.** The Committee will continue to monitor State Highway Administration projects that will help to provide some traffic relief to I-270.
- The Committee will continue to look for ways to simplify the Planning Department's efforts in determining future transportation needs as they relate to new housing and commercial development projects.

Land Utilization

- The Committee will continue to monitor properties held in reservation by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for possible future school sites. Due to limited development that is planned in certain areas, plans made years ago for possible school sites are not thought to be still prudent since a school population that is required for new school construction will likely never come in those particular areas.
- **A suggestion has been made by the Committee that proposed master plans for the communities that are near the Germantown and Boyds MARC train stations take particular care in considering traffic circulation that would affect those communities, parking, and the possibility of infusing retail into the Germantown MARC station area.**

- **The Committee promotes the continuous review and consideration of the Germantown, East Gaithersburg, and Shady Grove Master Plans.** These areas are, and will continue to experience, rapid residential and commercial expansion. It is important that expansion is in line with current redevelopment plans and growth opportunities.

County Data/Information Exchange

- **The Committee supports expanding the work of CountyStat and the utilization of county data to: a) strategically monitor, assess, and improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and performance of County services; b) solve problems; and c) develop targeted action plans and strategies to deliver results for residents, businesses, and communities.**

2017-2018 UCAB Guest Speakers

Full Board Meetings

July 17, 2017	Board Planning Retreat
September 18, 2017	A Council Perspective from County Councilmember George Leventhal (At-Large) Discussion: "I-270 Innovative Congestion Management Project" <i>Guests: Jeffrey T. Folden, PE, DBIA, Chief, Innovative Contracting Division, Office of Highway Development, State Highway Administration</i>
October 16, 2017	A Council Perspective from County Councilmember Sidney Katz (District 3) Presentation: "A Profile of the Upcounty (demographic & economic data, trends)" <i>Invited Guests: Dennis Linders & Thomas Tippet, CountyStat Office</i>
November 20, 2017	A Council Perspective from County Councilmember Craig Rice (District 2)
December 11, 2017	Discussion: "The Upcoming 2018 General Assembly Session" <i>Guests: State Legislators Representing Upcounty (Districts 14, 15, 17 and 39)</i>
January 22, 2018	UCAB hosted County Executive Leggett's Operating Budget Forum
February 26, 2018	Discussion: "Upcounty Priorities for the FY2019 Operating Budget"
March 19, 2018	Guest Discussion with County Councilmember Nancy Floreen (At-Large)
April 23, 2018	Discussion: "Montgomery County Public Schools" <i>Guest: Councilmember Craig Rice (District 2); Dr. Jack Smith, Superintendent MCPS</i>
May 21, 2018	Discussion: "Update from the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC)" <i>Guest: Bob Buchanan, Chairman, MCEDC; David Petr, President & CEO, MCEDC</i>
June 18, 2018	Board Annual Meeting and Reception

Committee Meetings

October 2, 2017	Discussion: "A Draft Profile of the Upcounty" <i>Guest: Dennis Linders & Thomas Tippet, CountyStat Office</i>
October 9, 2017	Discussion: "Small Telecommunication Antennas & a Draft Zoning Text Amendment to Address Neighborhood Concerns" <i>Guest: Mitsuko Herrera, ultraMontgomery Project Director, Dept. of Technology Services</i>
November 6, 2017	Discussion: "Tour of County's Transportation Management Center" <i>Guests: John Riehl, Manager, Transportation Management Center, MCDOT</i>
November 13, 2017	Presentation & Discussion: "Cyber Security in Montgomery County" <i>Guest: Joe Roundy, Cybersecurity Program Manager, Montgomery County Dieter Klinger, Chief, Enterprise Systems & Operations, Montgomery County</i>

December 4, 2017	<p>Discussion: "Update on State Roads" <i>Guest: Christopher Bishop, District 3, State Highway Administration</i></p>
December 18, 2017	<p>Discussion: "Responses to Opioid Use in the County" <i>Guest: Health & Human Services; MC Police Department; Fire & Rescue Services</i></p>
January 8, 2018	<p>Discussion: "The Status and Progress of School Construction" <i>Guest: Adrienne Karamihas, Acting Director of Capital Planning, MCPS</i></p>
January 22, 2018	<p>Discussion: "Resources that are Available to the Classroom" <i>Guest: Scott Murphy, Dir., Dept. of Secondary Curriculum & Districtwide Programs, MCPS</i> <i>Greg Edmundson, Elementary Dir., Office of School Support and Improvement, MCPS</i></p>
February 5, 2018	<p>Discussion: "Transportation Planning & Traffic Engineering" <i>Guests: Venu Nemani, Chief, Traffic Engineering & Operations, MC Dept. of Transportation;</i> <i>Pam Dunn, Chief, Functional Planning & Policy, MC Planning Department</i></p>
February 12, 2018	<p>Discussion: "Thoughts from Upcounty Chambers of Commerce" <i>Guest: Marilyn Balcombe, President/CEO, Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce</i> <i>Ann Meyer, President, Clarksburg Chamber of Commerce</i> <i>Gail Lee, President, Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce</i></p>
March 5, 2018	<p>Discussion: "MCPS' Inventory of School Sites"</p>
March 12, 2018	<p>Discussion: "Update on the Bus Rapid Transit Initiative" <i>Guest: Corey Pitts, Planning Section Manager, Department of Transportation</i></p> <p>Discussion: "County Effort on Clean & Renewable Energy" <i>Guest: Stand Edwards, Chief of Policy & Compliance, Dept. of Environmental Protection</i></p>
April 9, 2018	<p>Discussion: "County Schools – Planning and Construction" <i>Guests: Adrienne Karamihas, Director, Division of Capital Planning, MCPS</i></p>
April 16, 2018	<p>Discussion: "Safety & Security in Schools" <i>Guests: Robert Hellmuth, Director, Department of Safety and Security, MCPS</i> <i>Cmdr. David Anderson (1st District Police), Cmdr. Dinesh Patil (6th District Police),</i> <i>Lt. Amy Daum for Cmdr. Mark Plazinski (5th District Police)</i></p>
May 7, 2018	<p>Discussion: "Update on Draft MARC Rail Communities Plan & Impact on Adjacent Area" <i>Guest: Leslie Saville, Planner, Montgomery Planning Department</i> <i>Roberto Duke, Planner, MC Planning Department</i></p>
May 14, 2018	<p>(Meeting cancelled)</p>
June 4, 2018	<p>(Meeting cancelled – Combined Meeting scheduled with Land Use and Quality of Life June 11, 2018)</p>
June 11, 2018	<p>(Meeting cancelled)</p>

Testimonies and Correspondence



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

March 12, 2018

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Upcounty County Citizen's Advisory Board (UCAB) was pleased to host your Upcounty Annual Budget Forum held at the BlackRock Center for the Arts on January 29, 2018. The forum was an excellent venue for residents of the community to provide input for the FY 2019 budget. This year's forum was well attended by over 200 residents who had a range of funding concerns affecting their quality of life. We also had representatives of various county agencies on hand to provide additional information.

With a limited pool of resources to support all priority needs, we subscribe to the concept of do as little harm as possible to services that have already been impacted by the budget challenges in recent years. **Public safety, economic development, and services for the most vulnerable should be funding priorities. Other county services, including transportation, youth programs, and promoting the Agricultural Reserve as a destination, are aligned with your policy objectives and are often interlinked with other services to provide a comprehensive umbrella for county citizens and should be funded to the extent possible.**

Based on the information we received from our regular meetings and the budget forum, we submit the following recommendations for your consideration. We understand that we are commenting late in your deliberations, but we still wanted to share this information.

Economic Development

As the demographics of the county continue to evolve with a skew toward lower quintiles of income distribution, economic development will become more paramount to diversify the tax base of the county and, in particular, the area served by UCAB. We thank you for increasing the percentage funding to *Visit Montgomery* through the county's hotel tax to promote Montgomery County more effectively, and to help brand and market the Agricultural Reserve as a destination for visitors, businesses and events. We also thank you for supporting transportation services for the employees of the Premium Outlets at Clarksburg as well as to serving the public traveling to and from that location who are reliant on public transportation alternatives. As you finalize the FY19 Operating Budget, **we propose reducing regulatory fees for those businesses providing internships to our publicly-educated workforce to offer more incentives for small and midsize businesses to train and increase a pool of skilled resources for our economic development and growth.**

Education

The UCAB supports funding for the development of programs in partnership with Montgomery College to emphasize trade-related training in order to align with the shift in the county's demographics. Supporting students' needs for affordable tuition and *Youth Partnership Programs* to engage young adults during their transition from school to the workforce is important. The goal is to support meaningful opportunities to bridge the gap between those who are **not** interested in the traditional four-year college experience, but who want to refine their skills and return the investment the county has already made through their education. Additional trade and skill-based opportunities can be realized by incentivizing existing trades and businesses to partner with Montgomery College to provide such training.

Additionally, the UCAB recommends preserving "Excel beyond the Bell" for grades K-12.

Health & Human Services (HHS)

As was witnessed at the budget meeting, there is still a strong desire for seniors who would like to remain in Montgomery County (age in place), but who are finding it more difficult with the rising cost of housing and basic services. While seniors appreciate the County's efforts to make the county an age-friendly community, this can only be accomplished through programs that provide easy access to Medicare & Medicaid, reduced or free transportation, employment opportunities, and access to affordable housing. **The UCAB supports the safety net of services provided by churches and community organizations, including continued funding for the African-American Health Initiative. Therefore, UCAB recommends protecting the HHS budget.**


Transportation

The challenge remains to improve traffic flow throughout the Northern County using the various modes including, but not limited to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), MARC Rail System access for more commuters, and the implementation of improvements along the I-270 Corridor up to the Frederick County Line. **The UCAB also strongly urges consideration to support funding for added RideOn route(s) from Damascus to Germantown. These direct routes would reduce congestion on Ridge Road (MD 27) and provide residents access to the commercial districts around Germantown and Clarksburg, including access to Rockville using the proposed BRT.**

The UCAB supports funding for *pedestrian safety, improvement in traffic signalization, and the various transit programs that are in various stages of review, study and/or implementation.* The BRT is not expected to be deployed into the North County area until fairly late in the build-out schedule. The UCAB believes that this represents a missed opportunity for the County to offer relief to the citizens of the North County but prioritizing other improvements can at least have more of a short-term impact.

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board and the citizens of the Upcounty region respects the operating budget process and is grateful for the opportunity to offer these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Arthur Edmunds
Chair



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Testimony to the Montgomery County Council Public Hearing on the FY19 Operating Budget April 11, 2018

Good evening, I'm Kraig Walsleben, 2nd Vice Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (also known as UCAB), and we represent the fastest-growing area of Montgomery County, with half of the land area and over 300,000 residents. Over the past year our Board has invited experts from the county and from outside to discuss many matters of concern and opportunity. Tonight, I'll share what we think are priorities for the northern region of the county.

With a limited pool of resources, we suggest that we do as little harm as possible to services that have already been impacted by the budget challenges of recent years. Public safety, economic development, and services for the most vulnerable should be funding priorities. Other county services, including transportation, youth programs, and promoting the Agricultural Reserve as a destination, are all aligned with the county's objectives. When they are linked with other services, they provide a comprehensive package for county residents and should be funded to the extent possible.

Based on information and discussions from our regular meetings and from the County Executive's Annual Budget Forum, we offer the following comments.

Economic Development – We had supported the higher percentage funding through the hotel tax for *Visit Montgomery*. It will help in the branding and marketing of the Ag Reserve as a leisure and entertainment destination for residents, visitors and businesses. We also supported expanding transit services for employees and the general public traveling to and from the Premium Outlets in Clarksburg which we understand is seeing over 60,000 visitors per week. **We recommend funding for creative ideas that will help small and mid-sized businesses to increase the pool of skilled workers needed for the variety of industries in the county.**

Education – UCAB supports funding for programs that, in partnerships with Montgomery College, emphasize trade-related training and we encourage existing businesses to partner with the College to provide such training. Additionally, UCAB recommends funding to preserve the “Excel Beyond the Bell” program for middle-school youths.

Health & Human Services – UCAB recommends protecting the Health & Human Services Department budget so that residents, and especially our senior residents, have access to affordable housing, medical care, reduced or free transportation, and employment. **We also support grants to the congregations and community organizations that provide the important safety net of services. The Board is specifically interested in ensuring that funding is continued for the African-American Health Initiative.**

Transportation – UCAB supports continuing plans to bring relief from traffic congestion on I-270 and MD355 with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) as well as roadway improvements. **In particular, we strongly encourage funding for new Ride On routes that will connect Upcounty communities to each other.** For example, direct transit service is needed between Damascus and Germantown for students attending Montgomery College’s Germantown campus or for residents traveling to medical appointments, or to jobs. As time passes, we expect more direct routes between Germantown, Damascus, and Clarksburg so those communities can be linked.

We hope that the Council remembers that there still are opportunities to improve life in the Upcounty. On behalf of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, we appreciate this opportunity to present these comments.

Respectfully,

Kraig Walsleben
2nd Vice Chair

*Sidney Kramer Upcounty
Regional Services Center*

Upcounty Regional Services Boundary Map



Proudly serving approximately 300,000 residents of Barnesville, Beallsville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Dickerson, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac, Poolesville, Tobytown and Washington Grove.

The Upcounty Regional Services Center

The Upcounty Regional Services Center (URSC) is a 100,000 square foot facility that, in 2016-2017, housed 9 county agencies and 7 community partner agencies who together offered 34 different services. The Center is located at 12900 Middlebrook Road in Germantown, Maryland and provides a county presence for the northern region of Montgomery County where a third of the county's population or more than 280,000 people reside. The service area encompasses approximately 200 square miles and is bordered on the north by Frederick County, on the east by the Olney area, on the south by the Shady Grove Metro area and Rockville, and on the west by the Potomac River.

Upcounty Regional Office

The Center is anchored by the Upcounty Regional Office that functions as a link to the County Executive's Office; coordinates policy making and service delivery that focus on the particular needs of the Upcounty area; offers effective and timely problem-solving assistance to neighborhoods, individuals, community organizations, businesses, and agencies; and coordinates service delivery and assistance to the agencies housed in the Center. More specifically, the office offers an effective, timely liaison between Montgomery County and its citizens and businesses, and works with individuals, community groups, regional citizens advisory boards, and other public agencies to:

- research and disseminate information;
- identify and assess regional problems and issues and facilitate solutions;
- bring community perspective to major policy issues;
- assist with site evaluations for public facilities;
- promote a sense of community; and
- provide general on-site supervision of the center and build collaboration among partner agencies.

Major services provided to the public by the Upcounty Regional Office this year included:

- providing information and making referrals for county and other governmental entities about local programs, activities, and community issues;
- assisting individuals, groups, and neighborhoods in developing solutions to local problems;
- assisting new non-profits as they get established and build capacity to provide services;
- leveraging funds/resources for community-based initiatives (i.e. transit station safety);
- providing a county government presence and serving as the public's regional access point for communicating with county government;
- serving as one regional repository and the public's point-of-access for government and regional planning documents (master plans, sector plans, county budgets, Capital Improvements Program, maps, Mid-County Corridor Study, etc.);
- providing education and strategic-planning assistance to groups, neighborhoods and communities for local issues; and
- disseminating center and community information and special announcements through the center's webpage, mailing lists, e-newsletter and web-based events calendar.

In a broader effort to bridge the gap between citizen needs and county public services, the Upcounty Regional Director regularly looks for opportunities to bring relevant services from a variety of other agencies and organizations to the Center.

Other Center Agencies & Services in 2017-2018:

Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County

301-652-0717

Provides dispute prevention, resolution and education to individuals and community organizations. Call to schedule an appointment or visit www.crcmc.org

Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center

240-777-6950

This welcome center for new residents offers information and referral services, County programs and services provided by the County government as well as community organizations and non-profits. At the Upcounty Regional Services Center, the Gilchrist Center offers English as a second language (ESOL), citizenship preparation classes and pro bono legal services. Call for more information regarding other upcoming programs or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/gilchrist

Office of Community Partnerships - Faith Community Liaison

240-777-2503

The County's Liaison to faith communities offers information and problem-solving assistance primarily to places of worship in order to encourage inclusiveness and engagement in county government initiatives and processes and other civic activities. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cec

Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP)

301-916-5946

As a contract partner to the County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs, HIP provides foreclosure intervention counseling for Montgomery County homeowners. Bi-monthly foreclosure prevention workshops are provided followed by a one-on-one appointment with a certified housing counselor to discuss options available for families to remain in their homes or transition into other sustainable housing arrangements. Services for first-time homebuyers are also available. Bilingual counseling services are available. www.hiphomes.org

WorkSource Montgomery

240-406-5485

(workforce development services)

WorkSource Montgomery provides workforce solutions to local businesses and strengthens local job seekers' skills so that all of Montgomery County can compete in the global economy. Its "One-Stop Career Center" provides an array of services to job seekers and employers. <http://worksourcemontgomery.com>

Peppertree Children's Center

301-540-1170

Montgomery County, as part of a commitment to families and children, provides space in many public buildings for community child care. Peppertree Children's Center is a contractor to the Department of Health & Human Services and offers full-time and part-time care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years. Morning preschool is also offered. NAEYC accredited. www.peppertreechildrenscenters.com

Department of Health and Human Services

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs

Housing Stabilization Services/Emergency Services

240-777-4448

- Rental assistance
- Eviction prevention
- Foreclosure avoidance
- Court ordered evictions
- Past due or disconnected utilities
- Burial assistance
- Information and referral for food and prescriptions
- Homeless assessment services for families with children

Income Support Programs**240-777-3420**

- Temporary Cash Assistance for families
- Food Stamp Program
- Transitional Emergency, Medical and Housing Assistance (TEMHA) for residents who are totally disabled and cannot work
- Medical Assistance

Public Health**240-777-3380**

- Maternal and Child case management and home visitation
- “Access” nurse service, including assisting clients with Health Choice access as well as enrolling women into the County maternity program and acting as a health resource to walk-in clients
- Children’s immunization clinics
- Pregnancy tests, information and referral

Service Eligibility Unit (SEU)**240-777-3591**

- Helps find health coverage for uninsured Montgomery County residents through: Maryland Children’s
- Health Program, Prenatal Care, Care for Kids, Dental
- Provides information and phone numbers for food, shelter, and clothing needs
(Financial eligibility required)

Dental Program**240-777-3290**

- General dental services to children 0-17 years
- General dental services to maternity clients enrolled in the HHS maternity program
- Emergency service limited to preliminary evaluation and provided to children and seniors who are established clients.

Child Welfare**240-777-1742**

Continuing protective service, foster care service, case management, and home visitation; assist with family reunification. Aftercare services, in-home monitoring of children returned to families.

Affordable Healthcare Enrollment**240-773-8250**

Residents are assisted with enrolling in affordable health plans.

Street Outreach Network-Upcounty Field Office**240-777-1264**

The Street Outreach Network staff prevent, neutralize, and control hostile behavior in high risk youth and youth gangs by developing positive relationships between youth/community stakeholders and the outreach workers. The outreach worker uses positive youth development programs and leisure time activities as the intervening vehicle for redirecting antisocial and aggressive behaviors.

Family Service Agency Inc.**301-972-0307**

Serves youth and families from five school cluster communities in Clarksburg, Germantown, Damascus, Gaithersburg, and Poolesville. Services include individual and family counseling, psycho-educational/skills groups, information and referral, crisis intervention, community outreach/education, and tutoring. Visit www.guideprogram.org

Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF)**240-777-2746**

This regional CUPF office offers scheduling of meeting rooms at the Upcounty Regional Services Center, school facilities, library meeting rooms, Executive Office Building space, Council Office Building space, and school fields for community use in the Upcounty area. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cupf

Volunteer Center**240-777-2600**

Individuals, groups, and businesses can register for volunteer opportunities and offer their skills and talents. Student Service Learning (SSL) students can find projects and get credits to fulfill their graduation requirements. Visit www.montgomeryserves.org.

Office of Human Resources**240-777-5116**

The Center serves as the main training site for the County's Office of Human Resources where county employees are offered workshops, seminars and other training activities as scheduled. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ohr

**Montgomery County Public Schools
Office of Organizational Development****301-601-0300**www.montgomeryschools.org

The mission of the Office is the organizational development of a leading, self-renewing organization focused on achieving the school system goals by strengthening the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and practices of Montgomery County Public School's staff and stakeholders.

Transportation Services**301-840-8130**

This office coordinates and administers transportation services for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Maryland Leadership Workshops**301-444-8623**

Staff work with individual students and small groups at the middle school and high school levels to develop leadership skills during a summer camp experience. The program is in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Association of Student Councils, and Leadership Maryland.

**Wellness, Fitness and Performance Institute
Department of Recreation****240-777-6946**

The vision of the Health, Wellness and Performance Institute is to enhance the Wellness, Fitness and Performance of Montgomery County Residents. The institute has three pillars, wellness, fitness and physical performance. The mission of the wellness pillar of the Institute is to increase the physical activity and healthy eating practices in Montgomery County residents. The mission of the fitness pillar of the Institute is to enhance the cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular stabilization, strength, endurance, and flexibility of Montgomery County residents. The mission of the performance pillar is to enhance the performance of occupational, recreational, senior Olympic and student athletes in Montgomery County.

*Prepared by the Upcounty Regional Office
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